

that looked like conceding their position to be correct. President Buchanan in his Message to Congress on December 3, 1860, expressly denied the right of secession. It is true, he also stated it to be his opinion that the Constitution had not conferred on the general government the power to coerce a State to remain in the Union. But he still maintained the unimpaired right of the Federal Government to execute its laws within a State which had seceded; and he announced his intention of collecting the revenue, and holding and, if necessary, defending by force of arms the forts and other public property. And Mr. Buchanan was certainly one of the least radical statesmen in the Democratic party of the North. If no word dropped from his lips to encourage the hope that the North would consent to a peaceable dissolution of the Union, it was not likely that any good grounds existed for encouraging such a hope. Peace, assuredly, Mr. Buchanan was continually recommending; to a civil war he was unquestionably most averse; he would have the North make almost any sacrifice of its position on the slavery-question in order to reassure the Border States and induce the Cotton States to return. But Mr. Buchanan never recommended the North to acquiesce in the secession

of the Cotton States, nor did he ever yield
an iota on
the point of the abstract right of the
Federal Government to maintain its hold on all the
Southern
forts.

Nor was the action of Congress any
more favorable
to the claims of the secessionists. It is
true that
during the winter of 1860 and 1861 that
body took